



Solicitation Information
January 25, 2013

RFP #7459279

**TITLE: ARRA - Communications Services & Consultation – Race to the Top
Early Learning Challenge Grant**

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: February 22, 2013 AT 11:00 AM (EST)

Questions concerning this solicitation must be received by the Rhode Island Division of Purchases at gail.walsh@purchasing.ri.gov **no later than February 7, 2013 @ 12:00 Midnight (EST)**. Please reference the RFP # on all correspondence. Questions should be submitted in a *Microsoft Word* attachment. Questions received, if any, will be posted on the Purchasing website as an addendum to this solicitation. It is the responsibility of all interested parties to download this information.

**Gail Walsh
State of Rhode Island Division of Purchases**

Vendors must register online at the State Purchasing website at www.purchasing.ri.gov.

NOTE TO VENDORS:

Offers received without the entire completed three page RIVIP Generated Bidder Certification Form attached may result in disqualification.

THIS PAGE IS NOT A BIDDER CERTIFICATION FORM

Request for Proposals
RFP #7459279

*Communications Services and Consultation - Race to the Top
Early Learning Challenge Grant*

The Rhode Island Department of Administration, Division of Purchases, on behalf of the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) is requesting Proposals from qualified vendors to provide Communications Services and consultation in support of the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Grant communication outreach and in accordance with the terms of this solicitation.

INSTRUCTIONS AND NOTIFICATIONS TO BIDDERS:

Potential offerors are advised to review all sections of this solicitation carefully and to follow instructions completely, as failure to make a complete submission as described elsewhere herein may result in rejection of the proposal.

Alternative approaches and/or methodologies to accomplish the desired or intended results of this procurement are solicited. However, proposals which depart from or materially alter the terms, requirements, or scope of work defined by this Request will be rejected as being non-responsive.

All costs associated with developing or submitting a proposal in response to this Request, or to provide oral or written clarification of its content, shall be borne by the offeror. The State assumes no responsibility for these costs.

Proposals are considered to be irrevocable for a period of not less than sixty (60) days following the opening date, and may not be withdrawn, except with the express written permission of the State Purchasing Agent.

All pricing submitted will be considered to be firm and fixed unless otherwise indicated herein.

Proposals misdirected to other State locations or which are otherwise not present in the Division of Purchases at the time of opening for any cause will be determined to be late and may not be considered. The "Official" time clock is in the reception area of the Division of Purchases.

In accordance with Title 7, Chapter 1.1 of the General Laws of Rhode Island, no foreign corporation shall have the right to transact business in the state until it shall have procured a Certificate of Authority to do so from the Rhode Island Secretary of State (401-222-3040). *This will be a requirement only of the successful bidder (s).*

Offerors are advised that all materials submitted to the State of Rhode Island for consideration in response to this Request for Proposals will be considered to be public records, as defined in Title 38 Chapter 2 of the Rhode Island General Laws.

Also, Submitters should be aware of the State's MBE requirements, which addresses the State's goal of ten per cent (10%) participation by MBE's in all State procurements. For further information, contact the State MBE Administrator at (401) 574-8253 or Charles.newton@doa.ri.gov. Visit the website www.mbe.ri.gov

Interested parties are instructed to peruse the Division of Purchases web site on a regular basis, as additional information relating to this solicitation may be released in the form of an addendum to this LOI.

Equal Employment Opportunity (RIGL 28-5.1)

§ 28-5.1-1 Declaration of policy. – (a) Equal opportunity and affirmative action toward its achievement is the policy of all units of Rhode Island state government, including all public and quasi-public agencies, commissions, boards and authorities, and in the classified, unclassified, and non-classified services of state employment. This policy applies in all areas where the state dollar is spent, in employment, public service, grants and financial assistance, and in state licensing and regulation. For further information, contact the Rhode Island Equal Employment Opportunity Office, at 222-3090 or via email raymond.lambert@hr.ri.gov.

Subcontracts are permitted, provided that their use is clearly indicated in the offeror's proposal, and the subcontractor(s) proposed to be used are identified in the proposal.

RIGL 37-13-3.1 State public works contract apprenticeship requirements. * (a) Notwithstanding any laws to the contrary, all general contractors and subcontractors who perform work on any public works contract awarded by the state after passage of this act and valued at one million dollars (\$1,000,000) or more shall employ apprentices required for the performance of the awarded contract. The number of apprentices shall comply with the apprentice to journeyman ratio for each trade approved by the apprenticeship council of the department of labor and training.

ARRA SUPPLEMENTAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS

For contracts and sub-awards funded in whole or in part by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. Pub.L.No. 111-5 and any amendments thereto, such contracts and sub-awards shall be subject to the Supplemental Terms and Conditions for Contracts and Sub-awards Funded in Whole or in Part by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. Pub.L.No. 111-5 and any amendments thereto located on the Division of Purchases website at www.purchasing.ri.gov.

BACKGROUND/OVERVIEW

In December 2011, Rhode Island was announced as one of nine states awarded grants from the \$500 million Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge fund, a competitive grant program jointly administered by the U.S. Departments of Education and Health and Human Services. The Departments awarded Rhode Island \$50 million to be used over the next three years to develop a high-quality early learning system. These grant funds will enable Rhode Island to build upon the public private partnerships that increases access to quality early care and development programs for the State's highest need children. This quality early learning system is imperative to increasing school readiness and overall child outcomes for the youngest learners in our state.

As part of the grant implementation process, seven Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge projects were created, each focusing on distinct areas highlighted in Rhode Island's grant application as follows:

- Overall Grant Management;
- Improving the Quality of Early Learning Programs;
- Establishing and Measuring Tiered Quality Program Standards for Early Learning Programs;
- Using Early Learning and Development Standards;
- Developing and Supporting Effective Early Childhood Assessment;
- Building an Early Learning Data System; and
- Improving the Knowledge and Competencies of the Early Learning Workforce

The projects are led by designated state department staff from five state agencies: The Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE), Department of Human Services (DHS), Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF), Department of Health and the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (OHHS). The Grant is also supported through private partnerships facilitated through the Rhode Island Early Learning Council.

The development and implementation of a communication plan to span across the duration of the grant is mandated. Due to the interagency design of the grant, there is a need to establish a sustainable means of communication both internally and externally among stakeholders for the purposes of building an effective early childhood system of services. The system must include sustainable lines of communication through all participating state agencies and the RI Early Learning Council, and increase awareness and outreach to the Rhode Island community, early childhood stakeholders and policy makers on the scope and impact of grant activities.

SCOPE OF WORK

General Scope of Work

This proposal seeks a contractor to develop and implement a Communications Plan for inter-agency and external communications, outreach, and engagement associated with the tasks under the RTT-ELC grant. The successful bidder will assist in developing and executing a plan to communicate internally amongst the five partnering state agencies, the RI Early Learning Council, and externally to stakeholders in the early learning field and the public at large. The proposed communications plan should include traditional tools of communication and outreach, as well as utilize new media and social media platforms.

Tasks

The successful bidder will work in partnership with the RTT-ELC Grant Officer, the RI Early Learning Council Co-Chairs, and other pertinent State Agencies. The work of the selected vendor includes the following tasks:

- Identify baseline communications priorities for FY 2013 in partnership with RTT-ELC Grant Officer and RI Early Learning Council Co-Chair;
- Conduct a needs assessment to identify audiences, messages, and challenges associated with communication, outreach, and public engagement. This assessment will also include an evaluation of current methods of communicating with the early learning field their effectiveness to date;
- Assist in the design and implementation of a communications plan that addresses identified audiences and appropriate outreach and engagement activities as identified in the needs assessment, including ways to build upon existing communications methods. This plan should also address internal communication among state agencies working in concert on grant activities; and
- Evaluate the success of the implementation of the communications plan, including providing annual summary reports of communication activities completed pursuant to the communications plan at the end of each grant year (December 2013, 2014, 2015), an overview of lessons learned during implementation and recommendations for future communications with the early learning field.

Project Schedule

| Task | Deliverable | Schedule |
|------|--|---|
| 1 | Identify baseline priorities for FY 2013 in partnership with RTT-ELC Grant Officer and RI Early Learning Council Co-Chair | <i>Upon execution of contract</i> |
| 2 | Conduct a needs assessment to identify audiences, messages, and challenges associated with communication, outreach, and public engagement. | <i>February 2013</i> |
| 3 | Assist in the design and implementation of a communications plan that addresses identified audiences and appropriate outreach and engagement activities as identified in the needs assessment, including how to best build upon and improve existing communications vehicles and identifying new communications strategies and vehicles that should be developed and used. | <i>March 2013</i> |
| 4 | Implement the Communications Plan, in partnership with RTT-ELC Grant Officer and RI Early Learning Council Co-Chair. | <i>April 2013 to July 2015</i> |
| 5 | Evaluate the success of the communications plan, including annual summaries of communications undertaken during the previous year, an overview of lessons learned during implementation and recommendations for future sustainable means of communications with the early learning field. | <i>December 2013, December 2014, July, 2015</i> |

Deliverables

- Communications plan for agreed upon activities February 2013
- Proposed budget for communications plan February 2013
- Invoices for all work on a monthly basis
- Completion of identified reports on a timeline as identified by RTT- ELC Grant Officer, ELC Co-Chair and vendor

ADDITIONAL CONTRACTOR REQUIREMENTS/QUALIFICATIONS

- Knowledge, expertise, and experience in communications and media relations, especially the new media and social media.
- Knowledge and expertise in graphic design and Web design.
- Familiarity with contemporary issues in early childhood education, child care, preschool or other related field.
- Bidders must submit a letter of transmittal signed by an owner, officer, or other authorized agent.
- Bidders must submit relevant organizational information, a list of similar projects undertaken and/or clients served, agency expertise relative to the services requested, and a statement of existing workload as it impacts the performance of the project.
- Bidders must provide an overview of key personnel assigned to the project including education and prior experience.
- Bidders must disclose any work to be sub-contracted including the specific work to be performed and staffing, organizational structure, and business background of the sub-contractor.

TERMS OF THE CONTRACT

The contract will begin upon issuance of a state purchase order (approx. **February 2013**) and end **July 31, 2015**. The scope of the work may be modified by RIDE prior to beginning work on a given task. RIDE retains the option of granting a time extension of up to **90 days** with additional funding if available and if the level of work is expanded by mutual written consent. If necessary, deficiencies in performance of services and/or failure to supply deliverables in a complete and timely manner will be documented in writing by RIDE. Should a pattern of substantial dissatisfaction become apparent, RIDE reserves the right to terminate the contract.

COST PROPOSAL/TERMS OF PAYMENT

The contractor must prepare a cost proposal reflecting the hourly rate or other fee structure proposed for this scope of services using the Cost Proposal Forms contained in Appendix A. Cost proposals must fall within the range below for each period as follows:

| | |
|--------|----------------|
| FY2013 | Up to \$75,000 |
| FY2014 | \$ 50,000 |
| FY2015 | \$ 25,000 |

The total cost of the contract is not to exceed **\$150,000**.

PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

Questions concerning this solicitation may be e-mailed to the Division of Purchases at gail.walsh@purchasing.ri.gov no later than the date & time listed on the cover sheet of this solicitation. **Send your questions in Microsoft Word format.** Please reference the LOI # on all correspondence. Questions received, if any, will be posted and answered on the Internet as an addendum to this solicitation. It is the responsibility of all interested parties to download this information. For computer technical assistance, call the helpdesk at 401-222-3766 or Lynda.moore@doit.ri.gov.

Proposals (an original plus 4 copies) should include the following:

1. A completed and signed three-page RIVIP Bidder Certification Cover Form, available at www.purchasing.ri.gov.
2. A **separate sealed** Cost Proposal as described above.
3. A *separate* Technical Proposal (see below) describing the qualifications and background of the applicant and experience with similar programs, as well as the work plan or approach proposed for this requirement.
4. A completed and signed W-9 (taxpayer identification number and certification). Form is downloadable at www.purchasing.ri.gov.

Deliver to:

Department of Administration
Office of Purchases
One Capitol Hill
Providence, Rhode Island 02908

Contractor assumes all responsibilities for proposals submitted by mail or commercial delivery service. Proposals misdirected to other state locations or which are otherwise not present in the Office of Purchases at the time of opening, for any cause, will be determined to be late and will not be considered. Faxed responses will not be considered.

TECHNICAL PROPOSAL/REQUIRED ELEMENTS

- | | |
|--|-------------|
| 1. Contractor understanding of the Issues | (10 points) |
| 2. Work Plan | (25 points) |
| 3. Experience and Capacity of the Agency Effectively to Administer the Project | (25 points) |
| 4. Quality of Key Personnel (including Curriculum vitae) | (20 points) |
| 5. Cost Proposal | (20 points) |

The technical proposal should be 10-20 pages in length, respond to each area of the required elements listed above, and contain a cost proposal using the forms in Appendix A. Supplemental information may be appended to the technical proposal.

APPENDIX A

BUDGET MULTI-YEAR PROJECTS

The Contractor estimates that its budget for work to be performed under this Agreement is as follows:

| <u>Expense Category</u> | <u>Estimated Expenditures</u> | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------|--------|
| | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 |
| 1. Salary and Fringe Benefits | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 2. Consultant | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 3. In-State Travel | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 4. Out-of-State Travel | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 5. Printing | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 6. Office Expense | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 7. Telephone | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 8. Educational Materials | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 9. Equipment | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 10. Data Processing | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 11. Rental | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 12. Other | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 13. | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 14. | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 15. | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 16. | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Subtotal | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Indirect Cost | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| TOTAL | 0 | 0 | 0 |

It is understood and agreed that the amounts indicated above for the several line items are estimates of expenditures to be incurred by the Contractor on behalf of this Agreement and to be claimed by the Contractor for reimbursement under this Agreement. It is further understood and agreed that actual expenditures may vary from the estimates set forth above and that such variations shall not in themselves be cause for disallowance of reimbursement by RIDE; provided, however, that the Contractor shall notify and obtain the approval of the contract officer, in writing, if expenditures to be claimed for reimbursement in any line item above shall begin to vary significantly from the estimate given above; and provided further that unless permission of the contract officer shall have been obtained in advance, no expenditure shall be claimed by the Contractor for reimbursement by RIDE under this Agreement if such expenditure shall have been incurred in a line item category not listed above. Transfer of funds is permitted between Expense Categories (1) (2) and (3) up to 10% or \$25,000, whichever is less; all other transfers require prior written approval by the Department of Education.

BUDGET DETAIL SHEET
FISCAL YEAR _____

SALARY AND FRINGE BENEFIT DETAIL

| NAME | POSITION TITLE | HOURLY RATE WITH FRINGE \$ | NUMBER OF HOURS | SALARY & FRINGE TOTAL \$ |
|----------------------|----------------|----------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------|
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| TOTAL REQUEST | | | | |

DETAIL OF CONSULTANT

| NAME | POSITION TITLE | HOURLY RATE \$ | NUMBER OF HOURS | TOTAL COST \$ |
|----------------------|----------------|----------------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| TOTAL REQUEST | | | | \$ |

EXPLANATION OF OTHER EXPENSES (i.e. travel, printing, office supplies, educational materials, and equipment)

| EXPENSE CATEGORY | DESCRIPTION | COST |
|------------------|-------------|------|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

Please provide a budget detail sheet for each state fiscal year (July 1st – June 30th).